

In the claims:

1 1. In a radio communication system having a mobile station operable to
2 communicate by way of a first network pursuant to a first-network communication service
3 subscription, the first network operable pursuant to a first communication-standard protocol and
4 the first network coupled to a second network, the second network operable pursuant to a second
5 communication standard protocol, an improvement of apparatus for facilitating invocation of a
6 second-network service, resident at a second-network service control point, by the mobile
7 station, said apparatus comprising:

8 a bridge mechanism coupled to receive a first-network-generated request for
9 invocation of the second-network service by the mobile station, said bridge mechanism at least
10 for selectably initiating authorization of the mobile station to involve the second-network
11 service.

12 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first network comprises a legacy network,
13 wherein the second network comprises a new network and the second-network service comprises
14 a new-network service, the new network service unavailable at the legacy network, and wherein
15 the request to which said bridge mechanism is coupled to receive comprises a first
16 communication-standard protocol message.

17 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said bridge mechanism comprises a first
18 communication-standard protocol message detector, said first communication-standard protocol
19 message detector for detecting the first communication-standard protocol message that requests
20 the invocation of the second-network service.

1 4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said bridge mechanism further comprises a
2 second communication-standard, protocol-request message generator for generating a second
3 communication standard protocol-request message for communication to the second-network
4 service control point to request invocation of the second-network service by the mobile station.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said bridge mechanism further comprises a
2 second communication-standard, protocol-response message detector for detecting a second
3 communication-standard protocol-response message generated by the second-network service
4 control point and returned to said bridge mechanism.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said bridge mechanism further comprises a first
2 communication standard, protocol-response message generator coupled to receive indications of
3 detection by said second communication-standard, protocol-response message detector of the
4 second communication-standard protocol-response message, said first communication-standard
5 protocol-response message generator for generating a first communication standard-protocol
6 response message indicative of a value of the second communication-standard protocol response
7 message.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said bridge mechanism comprises a first
2 functional part functionally operable pursuant to the first communication-standard protocol and a
3 second functional part functionally operable pursuant to the second communication-standard
4 protocol.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the radio communication station comprises a
2 cellular communication system, wherein the first network is constructed pursuant to a
3 communication standard that defines a media gateway and wherein the first functional part
4 comprises media gateway functionality.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the second network is constructed pursuant to a
2 communication standard that defines a softswitch and wherein the second functional part
3 comprises softswitch functionality.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the second-network service comprises a prepaid
2 calling service and wherein the request for the invocation of the second-network service to which
3 said bridge mechanism is coupled to receive comprises a request for the invocation of the
4 prepaid calling service.

1 11. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the first network comprises a registry at which
2 service-subscription information associated with the mobile station is stored, the service-
3 subscription information including an indication of association of the mobile station with the
4 second-network service, and wherein the request for invocation of the second-network service to
5 which said bridge mechanism is provided thereto subsequent to access to the service-subscription
6 information stored at the registry.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the request for the invocation of the second-
2 network service is detected by the first functional part of said bridge mechanism.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the authorization selectably initiated by said
2 bridge mechanism is provided by the second functional part of said bridge mechanism.

1 14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the authorization selectably initiated by the
2 second functional part of said bridge mechanism comprises a second-communication-standard
3 protocol-formatted request routable by the second functional part to the second-network service
4 control point.

1 15. In a method for communicating in a radio communication system having a mobile
2 station operable to communicate by way of a first network pursuant to a first-network
3 communication service subscription, the first network operable pursuant to a first
4 communication-standard protocol and the first network coupled to a second network, the second
5 network operable pursuant to a second communication-standard protocol, an improvement of a
6 method for facilitating invocation of a second-network service, resident at a second-network
7 service control point, by the mobile station, said method comprising:

8 generating a first-communication-standard protocol message at the first network
9 to request invocation of the second-network service by the mobile station; and

10 generating a second-communication-standard protocol message responsive to the
11 first-communication-standard protocol message generated during said operation of
12 generating the first-communication-standard protocol message, the second-communication-
13 standard protocol message generated at the second network and representative of the request for
14 the invocation of the second-network service by the mobile station.

1 16. The method of claim 15 comprising the further operations of:

2 routing the second-communication-standard protocol message to the second-
3 network service control point; and

4 selectably granting the request for the invocation of the second-network service
5 subsequent to delivery of the second-communication-standard protocol message to the second-
6 network service control point.

1 17. The method of claim 16 comprising the further operation of:
2 generating a grant message at the second-network service control point, the grant
3 message formatted pursuant to the second communication standard protocol.

1 18. The method of claim 17 comprising the further operation of:
2 converting the grant message into a second-communication-standard protocol-
3 formatted message.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the first network comprises a legacy network
2 and the second network comprises a new network, wherein the second-network service
3 comprises a new-network service unavailable at the legacy network, and wherein the first-
4 communication-standard protocol message generated during said operation of generating the
5 first-communication-standard protocol message requests invocation of the new-network service
6 by the mobile station operable pursuant to the legacy network.

1 20. The method of claim 16 wherein the first-communication-standard message is
2 provided to a bridge mechanism bridging the first network and the second network, and wherein
3 the second-communication-standard protocol message is generated by the bridge mechanism.